

House Republican Press Release

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Williams Supports Eminent Domain Special Session



HARTFORD - State Rep. Sean Williams (R-Watertown) today echoed the call for a special legislative session this summer to limit the state's eminent domain laws that have been used to seize private property and turn it over to developers who then profit from economic development projects.

House Minority Leader Robert M. Ward of North Branford has spearheaded the drive to protect property owners' rights in the wake of the highly controversial U.S. Supreme Court decision involving the city of New London and residents of the Fort Trumbull area who challenged the use of eminent domain.

By a 5-4 margin the court ruled the state's eminent domain laws were constitutional by invited Connecticut to limit them if it wanted.

House Republicans have co-sponsored legislation that they want to introduce in a special session either later this month or in early August when the legislature is mandated to return to the Capitol to take up matters that were vetoed by Gov. M. Jodi Rell during the regular session.

"This is a pretty clear issue," said Representative Williams. "If you support the rights of homeowners and their Constitutional right to property, you support this measure. If you are on the side of big developers and big government seizing private property simply because it might earn them a buck, you are against it. The members of the legislature will show their true colors during this debate."

The proposal merely deletes from existing statutes six lines that currently permit development agencies from seizing property for economic development. Local and state governments could still exercise eminent domain to deal with truly blighted properties that pose health or safety hazards or for public works projects including schools roads and other infrastructure improvements.